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ABSTRACT

Recent statistics show that nationwide about 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within their first six years of teaching. In an effort to encourage the persistence of new teachers and to enhance their productivity and competence in the classroom, many school districts have begun supportive programs for the beginning teacher, known as induction programs. This document presents current research about the situation and needs of the beginning teacher, describes several models of induction programs, and reviews the development and implementation of induction programs in two Oregon school districts, Tigard and West Linn. Specific recommendations for administrators, based on research and the current experience of school districts, are as follows: (1) share research on the beginning teacher with school administrators and faculty, (2) consider multiple models for induction, (3) choose mentor or supporting teachers carefully, (4) protect the assignment of new teachers, (5) provide assistants for new teachers hired late, (6) increase supervision of new teachers, (7) balance new teachers' need for training with their need for time, and (8) form partnerships to support new and veteran teachers. A postscript describes the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory's new consortia to assist school districts' induction programs. Eleven references and a list of interviewees are appended. (1W)

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Induction Programs Support New Teachers and Strengthen Their Schools

Mary Cihak Jensen

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Preface

The Oregon School Study Council ended the 1985-86 school year with a publication titled *Recruiting and Selecting the Most Capable Teachers*. In that Bulletin, author Mary Cihak Jensen argued that attracting and hiring capable teachers was one key to ensuring the quality of schools.

Recruitment and selection of capable teachers is indeed a sturdy first step toward improving students' educational experience. It is, however, only a first step. Mounting evidence indicates that even the most capable teachers may not persist in the profession. In an effort to encourage the persistence of new teachers and to enhance their productivity in the classroom, many school districts have begun supportive programs for the beginning teacher--known as induction programs.

This Bulletin presents current research about the beginning teacher and describes the efforts two Oregon school districts are making to meet the needs of these new professionals. Author Mary Cihak Jensen, a member of the OSSC staff, is a doctoral candidate in the University of Oregon's Division of Educational Psychology.

Philip K. Piele
Executive Secretary

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Introduction

Let's face it. The new teacher who opens the classroom on Monday may have graduated last Friday. That teacher may have moved to a new area and lived alone for the first time. All of a sudden, he or she is expected to be an adult and a professional, and an exceptionally competent one at that.

John Mahaffy is director of the Center for Professional Development at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon. He believes that many new teachers find their first years traumatic.

He believes, too, that structures within schools tend to intensify the new teachers' problems. Teachers often work in isolation, rarely observing one another or getting feedback from their peers. Without established structures of peer communication and support, the new teacher may wonder how to get help without admitting he or she is having trouble. Mahaffy is aware that school administrators may not be aware of the problems new teachers face:

Sometimes principals will tell me they wish they had all beginning teachers because they are so competent and energetic. When they say that, I have to wonder how much those beginning teachers are hiding and how hard they are working to seem so competent. Teaching is an incredibly complex job and it takes time to learn it.

This Bulletin focuses upon new teachers, those who face that "incredibly complex job" for the first time. In doing so, it also considers the benefit districts derive from supporting new professionals during the phase of induction into their careers. In chapter 1, a summary of current research describes the needs of both the new teachers and of the districts that hire them. Chapter 2 presents the system used by Tigard School District to support the probationary teacher.

In chapter 3, West Linn School District offers an alternative approach to structures for the new teacher. Chapter 4 derives from research and practice several recommendations for districts

that want both to assist and to assess their new teachers. A postscript describes the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's new consortia to assist school districts' induction programs.

What Have We Learned about Beginning Teachers?

Programs offered by school districts to teachers in the probationary or induction phase of their careers can meet the needs of the new professionals as well as the needs of the districts. Drawing on recent research, this chapter considers the attrition of new teachers, the needs of beginning teachers, and the relationship between teachers' competence and the first years of their careers.

Attrition of New Teachers

The quality of the teacher work force is influenced not only by who enters teaching, but by who stays in teaching. Nationwide, about 15 percent of first-year teachers leave the profession; 10 percent leave in each of the second and third years; 5 to 7 percent leave in each of the fourth, fifth, and sixth years (Schlechty and Vance 1981). About 50 percent, then, have left teaching after six years. But the most dramatic attrition rate occurs during the probationary period, the first three years of teaching. Inadequate pay and poor morale among teachers are frequently cited reasons for the attrition.

The attrition figures are distressing enough when they are coupled with the forecasts of a national shortage of teachers. The figures are even more distressing when they are linked to another common suggestion of research: the most qualified new teachers may be the first to leave (Schlechty and Vance 1981 and Darling-Hammond 1984). Linda Darling-Hammond attributes the high rate of attrition among the most academically qualified teachers to working conditions within the schools. She describes the new teachers' discontent with bureaucratic restrictions, lack of participation in decisions about the schools, and inadequate support by administrators. Attrition among teachers is costly to both individuals and their institutions.

The Experience of Industry

Voluntary turnover among newcomers has increased in organiza-

tions other than schools. Industrial research indicates an increasing rate of attrition among college graduates in the first eighteen months of their first career jobs. Newcomers may suffer from unrealistic and unmet expectations, isolation, and the organization's "sink-or-swim" philosophy. According to Meryl Louis (1980), programs designed to initiate new employees often fail to take into account the difficulties the employees experience while adjusting to a new job, a new setting, and a new status.

Newcomers in any organization are changing, moving away from familiar places and roles, and letting go of former lifestyles and relationships. At the same time that newcomers must let go of earlier roles and roots, they must begin to understand the culture of their new setting. Each organization, Louis points out, has a personality of sorts, often referred to as an organizational culture. The culture includes "how we do things here" and "what matters here"--the often unspoken norms, attitudes, and expectations of the group.

The New Teacher in the School Culture

Although in many respects the experiences and needs of new teachers are similar to those of newcomers in other organizational settings, in some ways their situation differs. In many industrial settings, the orientation of the newcomer includes an apprenticeship period during which the new job may be experienced in a simple-to-complex learning sequence. Dan Lortie (1975) contends that this gradual assimilation into the job is not possible for the teacher:

Fully responsible for the instruction of his students from his first working day, the beginning teacher performs the same tasks as the twenty-five year veteran. Tasks are not added sequentially to allow for gradual increase in skill and knowledge; the beginner learns while performing the full complement of teaching duties.

The job first-year teachers face may be more difficult than that the experienced staff member encounters. Elizabeth Clewitt (1984) summarized research on the beginning teacher for the Oregon Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. She found that the difficulties of the new teacher tend to be exacerbated by organizational structures. Often new teachers are assigned larger groups of students, more difficult students, and more duties of both an instructional and noninstructional nature. The teaching assignment itself is also frequently unrelated to the new teacher's subject matter expertise and experience in teacher training.

Lack of supervision of the beginning teacher can contribute to the problems of the beginner as well as to the difficulties of his

or her district. School principals are frequently reluctant to monitor the performance of new teachers during the first months of the school year, preferring instead to let new teachers "try their wings" without fear of evaluation. While this sentiment may spring from laudable motives, it can have unexpected negative consequences. Unaided, new teachers tend to experience difficulties, particularly in discipline and classroom management, that compound as the school year progresses. Without supervision and feedback, they may repeat costly errors.

In many if not most schools, supervision of the new teacher is rare, limited to infrequent and brief observations of classroom performance. Ironically, supervisors tend to rate beginners' competence more highly than do the beginners themselves. Perhaps afraid of discouraging new teachers, administrators may miss opportunities to encourage them.

Typically new teachers tend to socialize themselves into the profession. They learn both the job of the teacher and the culture of the school by observing staff members rather than by communicating directly with them. A double barrier inhibits open communication: the newcomer is reluctant to betray lack of knowledge or competence, and experienced teachers do not wish to be seen as meddlers. Through careful observation newcomers may learn some of the techniques their more experienced colleagues have adopted. Some beginners report picking up clues from assignments on experienced teachers' chalkboards, papers left at the copy machine, and comments made in the lunchroom. In schools where no structure of peer support exists, the newcomer may suffer from lack of a legitimate access to the expertise of his or her colleagues.

This is not to say that new teachers are not influenced by their colleagues. They are in fact more influenced by the people in their new school settings than they are by their recent educational training. The influence on new colleagues is usually exerted in informal ways, through role modeling. Still, the lack of formal support structures and legitimate access to those role models can leave the beginner feeling abandoned in the face of the complex task of teaching (Griffin 1985).

Needs of the New Teacher

Much of our nation's research on the needs of the beginning teacher is "unseasoned," merely in its beginning stages. An additional complication arises from the fact that many studies use a small number of subjects: drawing conclusions and generalizations from a small sample can be misleading.

One point of difference in this early stage of research is whether the first year of teaching can be termed *traumatic*.

Apparently some, but not all, beginning teachers experience their initial year of teaching as traumatic. In a study conducted at the University of Austin, for example, new teachers reported varying degrees of distress in their first year, with discomfort coming primarily from the difficulty of their teaching assignment.

Whether or not one would call the first year of teaching traumatic, Clewitt's review of the current research shows beginning teachers commonly face similar problems:

1. Classroom management and discipline
2. Student motivation
3. Adjustment to the physical demands of teaching
4. Managing instructional tasks (organizing work, individualizing assessment and assignments, instruction, locating materials and resources)
5. Sacrificing leisure time
6. Managing noninstructional demands of the position (establishing relationships with students, parents, colleagues; managing extracurricular assignments; enlisting assistance of other staff members)

Susan Roper, Randy Hitz, and Burl Brim of Southern Oregon State College emphasize the noninstructional challenges beginning teachers face. New teachers, they argue, need to learn to work with other adults, to acquire a more realistic view of the teaching profession, and to be given a more complete theoretical framework from which to work. Too often, students enter teacher education believing they will work almost exclusively with children. Typically, teacher education focuses on preparing teacher candidates for instructional tasks and work with children. Rarely does the student teacher learn how to conduct parent conferences, how to work as a member of a teaching team, how to seek support in new settings, or how to deal with the frustration of not reaching every student.

Induction Programs Address Multiple Needs

In 1981, Nancy Isaacson studied the support offered University of Oregon graduates during their first year as teachers. Isaacson defined *support* as the means by which individuals reduce the uncertainties and make sense of the complexities involved in beginning to teach. The first-year teachers in her research reported receiving little or no formal or informal support. In schools where both informal and formal support were available, the first-year teachers tended to find the informal support more valuable. Informal support was usually offered by experienced colleagues and included providing role models, sharing experiences, and suggesting specific strategies and materials. Colleagues especially assisted newcomers when they provided information that helped the new teacher make sense of the school's

political dynamics, assumptions, and unspoken norms.

The new teachers perceived three types of formal institutional support:

1. Provision for legitimate, recognized, and timely access to at least one trusted colleague--formal assignment to a mentor
2. Formal increased supervision, periodic observations, and specific feedback
3. Formalized opportunities to meet regularly with groups of their colleagues

In the five years since the Isaacson study and similar research, beginning teachers have received attention at the state and local levels. Despite the embryonic nature of the research itself, state departments of education, school districts, and even state legislatures have responded with programs. Several states, including Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, and South Carolina, have mandated attention to the new teacher.

Nationwide, structures of induction programs vary. Their one commonality is that they all promote a high level of interaction among the beginning teacher, administrators, and colleagues. A common model uses experienced teachers as mentors or sponsors, providing the newcomer with legitimate access to a colleague's expertise. From discussing the math curriculum to untangling the social expectations of the staff room, the mentor provides a sounding board for the newcomer's questions and concerns. In addition to offering informal support, mentor teachers may provide formal classroom observation in a clinical supervision format.

Another model of induction emphasizes increased supervision and coaching by the site administrator or by the districts' staff development personnel. Several states propose to consider the first year of teaching as an internship, one that features intensive feedback from district supervisors.

Still another model combines the energies of school and higher education personnel. In this structure, teacher educators work with school district administrators and classroom teachers to ensure that the new teacher's transition from student teaching to full-time teaching is smooth. Since 1963 the University of Oregon's Resident Teacher Program has provided a form of transition and internship to qualified students.

Because most of the programs are relatively new, few are described in professional literature and even fewer have been evaluated.

Induction Programs and Teacher Competence

State legislatures, teacher training institutions, and school districts are all frequently accused of responding slowly to research findings. Why then has there been such immediate attention to one area of educational research? Sympathy for the beginning teacher probably motivates activity. An equally strong motivation arises from the fact that in meeting those teachers' needs, districts meet two major needs of their own.

First, districts that have invested time and money to attract good teachers protect their investment with programs to retain them. The attrition rate of new, promising teachers is not just a problem to personnel directors; it is a concern to everyone who desires to fashion effective schools. Attrition of the talented is a loss to students, schools, and the profession.

Second, the desire to upgrade the competence of their teaching staffs motivates districts to pay attention to the beginning teacher. Districts that take seriously the granting of tenure consider the individual's first three years a true probationary period. In selecting teachers, districts are hampered by the fact that there are no clear indicators that would predict a candidate's performance as a teacher. The probationary period, however, can serve as a sample of the person's potential, a demonstration of skills over a long time. Increased supervision and feedback during the first years direct the new teacher's efforts toward competence in the profession.

Russell Joki, superintendent of Tigard (Oregon) School District, believes that induction programs take advantage of the fact that new teachers are "coachable"; they capitalize on the positive attitude new teachers have when they come to the district.

The next two chapters detail the induction programs in the Tigard and West Linn School Districts.

Induction Is the First Step in Tigard's Continuous Staff Development Plan

The Tigard School District believes in the continuous growth of its staff. The district backs up that belief with substantial commitments of funds and personnel. Their staff development program provides a wide range of services including district classes and workshops, college tuition reimbursement, classroom followup, and research projects.

Tigard's staff development effort originally featured training in clinical supervision and ITIP (Instructional Theory into Practice). Beginning with the administrators of the district, former Staff Development Director Gale Elkins shared strategies she learned from UCLA's Madeline Hunter. The ITIP strategies are still taught and refined in Tigard's current staff development program, but the range of offerings has expanded beyond that single model. Topics offered veteran teachers during the last school year ranged from learning styles to peer coaching to computer literacy.

The development of new teachers is, then, one part of a continuous staff development plan for all teachers in the Tigard School District. At employment interviews, Robert Post, personnel director, outlines the district's expectations for growth to each candidate for a teaching position. He finds that potential employees are not reluctant to participate in the development programs. In fact, he says, candidates seek positions in Tigard because of the district's high expectations.

Regardless of their previous experience, all teachers new to the district will see a member of the staff development team within the first two or three weeks of the school year. Teachers who have had teaching experience but are new to the district are observed and offered individualized staff development plans. This chapter discusses the individual and group services offered to beginning, inexperienced teachers in the Tigard schools.

Coaching the Beginner

One of the district's two staff development specialists, Jan Altig and Debbie Beeson-Merkel, assumes responsibility for

coaching each beginning teacher. From the start of their relationships with the beginners, Altig and Beeson-Merkel work to be as supportive and nonthreatening as possible. Before school opens, they visit with the first-year teacher in the classroom. Beeson-Merkel describes a gentle form of guidance: "I might say, 'I know as a teacher you need to have rules. Which ones have you thought about and where will you post them?'" The personal conferences focus on the teacher as well as the class. The two staff developers want to know what the new teacher is feeling as well as doing.

The two encourage beginning teachers to take small steps, one at a time. They compare learning to manage a classroom with learning to master a new sport: the first efforts at efficiency in the classroom can be much like the first swings of the golf club.

Altig and Beeson-Merkel offer coaching in a variety of forms. Altig describes one method:

We make an appointment with the beginning teacher to observe. While observing, we write or tape what the teacher says so that we have in effect a script of what occurred. As soon as possible after the lesson, we conference with the teacher. The teacher does the first analysis of the script and we give feedback. We point out strengths and select just one area for improvement. We will focus on that area in our coaching and later observations.

Coaching may also take the form of demonstration teaching, team teaching, or joint observation of another teacher. The staff developers sometimes literally coach from the sidelines, using preestablished nonverbal cues to guide new teachers through a lesson.

Are the early observations threatening to new teachers? Elkins contends that any newcomer to any organization feels anxiety, but that the Tigard staff development structure protects the newcomer from tension in many ways. "The support here is predictable."

Coursework for Beginning Teachers

The routine of classroom observations and conferences is integrated with formal workshops. The staff development team places new teachers in groups according to their experience, not according to their grade level. Elkins explains, "Teaching is a generic skill that transcends grade level. This structure allows us to draw instructional examples from every grade." The group meetings are well planned yet flexible enough to provide what individual teachers need. Each session includes discussion as well as formal

presentations. In the 1985-86 school year, Tigard offered four one-half-day workshops during morning released time. Topics focused on the unique needs and concerns of first-year teachers:

- classroom management and student discipline
- student motivation
- mastering content
- fitting into the school environment
- preparing and organizing work
- locating materials and resources
- establishing relationships with students, parents, colleagues
- adjusting to the physical demands of teaching

Training in Classroom Management

Like most beginning teachers, Tigard's first-year teachers tend to experience most difficulty in classroom management. Individual coaching and structured group sessions address this area at the start of each school year.

Brent Rappuhn was a beginning teacher last year in Tigard High School's science and mathematics department. He recalls:

I left college with some expectations: "I'll teach. Students will learn. They'll behave in order to learn." Instead, I've seen how much preparation goes into managing a classroom so that I *can* teach and students *can* learn.

By the time of this interview, last spring, Rappuhn was able to smile wryly: "Classroom management doesn't seem like much until you have to do it." When he graduated from college, Rappuhn expected to face problems in his subject area, science. His greatest apprehensions were about answering difficult questions or setting up effective laboratory experiences. Instead, he found that his academic training had prepared him well with subject area knowledge and that the specialists on the high school staff could assist him with implementing the science and math curricula. What came as a surprise was the challenge of managing a class and laboratory setting:

I can see now how new teachers who don't learn what's going wrong in their classroom management can get frustrated right out of the profession. Without the help of the Tigard staff development program I might never have realized just what was going wrong in my own teaching.

Now I ask myself, Why were some of my own teachers effective and some not? I believe now it depended on how well they were able to logically, step-by-step present what it was they wanted me to do.

Maria Havery spent her first year of teaching as a physical education instructor in two Tigard schools. She agreed with Rappuhn: "As a group of beginning teachers we all had slightly different problems, but the main concern was discipline. Colleges just can't prepare you for what it's really like in a classroom."

In addition to classroom observations and individual coaching, Havery found that the frequent group meetings offered a combination of instruction and encouragement:

Sometimes we'd get together and tell horror stories. Then we'd talk about how we could make our classes better. As a new teacher you say to yourself, 'It's just me. Nobody else is having this problem.' Then, when everyone else shares what problems they are having, you find out that yours is a common challenge in teaching and that there are ways to solve it.

Rappuhn and Havery emphasize the importance of choosing highly qualified coaches to work with new teachers. Havery describes the Tigard staff developers:

They are outgoing, easy to talk to, not pushy or opinionated. They listen, watch, sit back. They are loving and concerned. They're not just here to judge your teaching; they want to know how your *life* is going this year.

Districts should be choosing their top teachers for these positions because, really, the best teachers have the tact and concern.

Havery did find the consultants' advice sometimes idealistic. "Not everything works the way they said it would, but then I want someone to look up to while I learn about teaching, someone who can keep telling me how it ought to be."

Rappuhn found the staff developers encouraging. "My consultant told me the district appreciated the amount of time I spent preparing classes. She kept telling me it takes time to be a good teacher, that her own first year was difficult, too."

Administrators and the Beginning Teacher

In addition to providing considerable service to beginning teachers each year, the district staff development team also reinforces the role of school staff members in supporting the beginners. Principals receive an inservice on the needs and characteristics of beginning teachers. The team suggests that each beginner be matched with a "buddy" or support teacher in the

building. Anne Wax, then principal of Fowler Junior High School, finds the district team a valuable support: "The beginning teacher ordinarily needs my help when I am the busiest at the start of the school year. The team does all the things I would like to do. They take some burden off me, especially the burden of my conscience." Wax, in fact, will herself help relieve the consciences of district principals; she assumes the role of director of staff development this school year.

Edward Gottlieb, teacher evaluator at Tigard High School, believes the program for beginning teachers has created a truly identifiable probationary period for teachers:

Before this effort, being a probationary teacher meant only that you got more evaluations and fewer rights than tenured teachers. Now administrators are more concerned about their probationary staff. The interaction among us all has increased. This is the first group I've seen that really feels the district is interested in them. They have a strong feeling of belonging.

Classroom management has always been a problem for new teachers. Poor management blocks everything else the teacher wants to do. They find the classroom climate getting more negative each day. Usually there's a barrier to communication about that problem, but here the training sessions break down the barriers of communication about problems. In fact, I sat in on the group training so I could increase my credibility with the new people. It's easier now for me to talk to new teachers about problems like management. It's just easier for us to work together now.

Wax says that the program increases relationships for the new teacher and makes him or her less dependent upon the school administrator. "I'm not sure I bonded as closely with this new teacher as I have with others." Will the lack of dependency on an administrator have any implications for evaluation? Wax agrees her evaluation this year may, because of the lessened dependency, be fairer, more objective.

Supervising the New Teacher

The work of the staff development team does not replace the evaluative function of the district's principals. Instead, in many ways the team's work prepares the new teacher for evaluation. Tigard's new teachers understand that their initial visit from the staff developers is confidential. Neither the school principal nor the district personnel director learns of its content. Once

the beginning teacher and his or her consultant develop their year-long goals for observations and conferences, that plan is shared with the school principal. The staff developers also maintain communication with the principals to clarify needs of the beginning teacher and identify ways in which the administrator may assist the newcomer.

Tigard administrators have wrestled with the question of confidentiality of the work of the staff development specialists. Gottlieb believes it is an issue that deserves even further discussion:

We need to be realistic. It's hard not to share critical information. Teachers need to recognize that if there is a need to share information it will be shared, that we are all here to do the best possible job in education. As long as we are clear in our minds that supervision and evaluation are designed to promote teacher growth, as long as we cling to that we're all right. However we handle this issue we can't annihilate the trust of our teachers. Trust takes so long to build and can go away so fast.

Tigard's superintendent, Russell Joki, finds that the supportive structure coaches new teachers into good feelings about supervision and prepares them for collegial relationships:

The beginning teacher tends to expect to have all the answers at once. Student teaching hasn't given them a sense of the length of the school year. They tend to overload the students and themselves with expectations, not realizing that learning is an incremental process. Supervisors are here to say, "You've got time to accomplish this and we're here to help."

Sometimes new teachers have a tendency to isolate themselves for fear of admitting they don't have answers. The staff developers are like bridges to the district, people they can confide in. That's true for the experienced but new-to-Tigard teachers: they may have taught ten years but they don't know people in this district. These programs keep classroom doors open, help us change the perception that teachers work in isolation.

By creating a transition from student teaching to first-year teaching, the Tigard program can fill in any gaps in the training of their new personnel. The program can add to teacher competence in another way: the increased interaction and observation of new teachers allows the district to distinguish between newcomers who grow stronger with support and those who cannot or do not become more accomplished. The true probationary period allows the district to make decisions about continuing an investment in new teachers who appear not to grow. A plan of assistance is written

when a new teacher is in difficulty and seems unresponsive to the staff development training. In these cases, the director of staff development, a member of the district's administrative team, works with the probationary teacher and the school principal in the plan of assistance.

Where Does One Begin?

The Tigard staff development program began approximately eight years ago and has grown steadily. Joki advises other districts to start small, with the most coachable teachers: "Don't start so big that the project falls apart under its own weight." He suggests that districts cooperate with university or college programs: "Tuition reimbursement plans allow your teachers to receive graduate credit for their training. The higher education staffs can provide a research base for your efforts, so that you have data to present to the community and school board about your progress." Joki prefers using permanent district staff to outside consultants, but if districts begin with consultants, he recommends that they move soon to their own staffing.

And one final piece of advice: "Don't be fearful of spending money for staff development. It's going to be costly, but it more than pays for itself."

Judging from two consumers of the program for beginning teachers, the Tigard district is reaping dividends on its investment. "I'm anxious to start my second year of teaching," Havery says. Rappuhn agrees, pointing to the notes he'd taken during last year's group sessions: "I'm ready for the new year--there are things I'll do differently right away. In fact, there will always be things I'm improving."

West Linn Builds Teacher Effectiveness Through Attention to Each New Teacher's Needs

The West Linn School District, located south of Portland, believes in "no surprises." Applicants for teaching positions in this district understand that they will be expected to participate in a thorough staff development program. Indeed, the training of new personnel is just one strand in the district's teacher effectiveness program. Designed by district administrators four years ago, the staff development program continues to grow and improve.

Orientation Period

During the first nine weeks of each school year, teachers new to the West Linn School District meet once a week with their school's administrators. Milt Dennison, formerly the district's director of curriculum and instruction, calls this "the survival phase" of the induction program. The weekly meetings are intended to acquaint new staff members with the district's policies, procedures, and values. They are also intended to create supportive collegial relationships among the teachers and administrators. Agendas are set by the group: the needs and questions of the new teachers guide the sessions.

Each new teacher has a "teaching partner," an experienced teacher who can provide day-to-day information and support. In addition, new teachers can participate in the district's peer coaching program: they can, if they wish, request a peer coach during their first year of teaching.

Induction Training

Leaders in the West Linn School District believe that the specific needs of new teachers should dictate the agenda of formal training sessions. During the first nine weeks of the school year, each new teacher assesses his or her skills in areas of competence that the district has identified as crucial to effective instruction. Formal seminars held during the second quarter are based on the participants' input.

"Each new teacher is distinct," Dennison says. "Some may have just completed student teaching; others may be transferring to us after several years of competent teaching. The content of our training arises from their needs. Experienced teachers may be offered totally individualized plans of support." Dennison points out that the West Linn district is unlike many others that espouse a specific training format:

We believe that there is not just one way to improve instruction, not just one strategy that works. We don't use only an ITIP procedure, for instance, because we are not looking for one answer or one direction.

A training team conducts the "New Teacher Seminar" during the second nine weeks of the school year. The team--composed of district administrators and teachers as well as instructors from outside the district--invites interested, experienced teachers to join the seminar. The course is offered free of charge, and participants receive college credit for completing it successfully. In addition to weekly formal sessions, the training format features individualized classroom observation and followup. The 1985-86 topics, designed by the participants, included questioning strategies, student motivation, communicating high expectations, providing for individual differences, and time management.

A District Commitment

In addition to offering support for beginning teachers, the West Linn program is designed to improve the evaluation of probationary teachers. The district takes the granting of tenure very seriously. "Advancing a teacher to tenure is a million dollar decision," Dennison says.

We see the evaluation for tenure as a three-year process. We tell beginning teachers that we do not expect them to demonstrate excellent skills right away, but neither can they expect tenure to be automatic. They have two to three years to show their competence. During that time they, their school administrators, and perhaps their peer coaches constantly assess their progress.

We are not reluctant to use a plan of assistance even in the first year for teachers having trouble. In that case, we will pay an outside consultant, usually a university instructor, to coach the new teacher.

The annual Tenure Celebration is clear proof of West Linn's emphasis upon competence. Each spring, district personnel gather to honor those teachers who have achieved a tenured position. A prominent speaker adds to the formal and informal congratulations of administrators and peers.

"Working with probationary teachers is probably one of the most important things we do as administrators," Dennison explains. "We are simply convinced that the only way to build excellence is through people. The best buildings, supplies, and equipment won't build excellence. People will."

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research on induction programs for new teachers may be young, but the testimony of school districts like Oregon's Tigard and West Linn argues strongly for their development. Programs that support beginning teachers are intended to enhance teacher competence, reduce teacher attrition rates, improve children's instruction, and strengthen the school as an organization. The following recommendations summarize the suggestions of the early research and the current experience of school districts.

1. Share research on the beginning teacher with school administrators and faculty. School administrators, teachers' groups, and school boards may begin simply by paying attention to the needs of new teachers. Becoming aware of common problems newcomers face is a critical first step. During the initial weeks of any school year, the new teacher is likely to be forgotten while schedules are set and reset, classes aligned, texts distributed, faculty sessions held. At the very time when the new teacher's concern may be the highest, the school administrator is the busiest. The administrator who reviews the research on new teachers with his or her faculty sensitizes the staff to the needs of the newcomer and shares the responsibility of orientation widely.

2. Consider multiple models for induction. No one model or program fits the needs of every school district, much less the needs of every new teacher. Districts can individualize the degree of formality, type of support, level of staffing, and choice of instructional format within induction programs.

3. Choose mentor or supporting teachers carefully. If the school's induction program includes the appointment of mentor teachers, the selection of the mentors is critical. Research and common sense both suggest that a capable teacher who teaches the same subjects at the same grade level and within the same instructional style could be most helpful to a new teacher. Beyond this generalization, however, other qualities should be considered.

The mentor needs more than pedagogical skills: he or she must be able to communicate with the newcomer openly and supportively. Ideally, the mentor should be someone who enjoys the chance to

learn from the helping relationship, someone who considers working with a newly trained teacher an opportunity to enhance his or her own skills. Most critically, the mentor teacher is likely to influence more than the new teacher's instructional skills: the mentor can have a powerful impact upon the values and norms of the new teacher.

4. Protect the assignment of new teachers. In the past, new teachers have commonly been assigned to larger groups of students, more difficult classes, unpopular committees, multiple preparations, and extracurricular tasks. Many new teachers have found themselves assigned to less desirable, poorly equipped classrooms in comparison with other teachers' rooms and materials. Districts that protect the assignment of new teachers ensure that they receive a reduced or favored load, their classrooms are well equipped, and their materials equal those of the veteran staff members.

5. Provide assistants for new teachers hired late. Districts frequently are unable to hire new teachers until enrollment is verified: it is not uncommon for new teachers to receive contracts the day before school opens, or even after school opens. Conserving the new teacher's energy for his or her job is a primary concern. Moving furniture, decorating bulletin boards, and assembling materials are tasks paraprofessional assistants can do. District consultants or recently retired teachers can assist the new teacher with initial classroom organization.

6. Increase, rather than decrease, supervision of new teachers. New teachers apparently are not best "left alone to learn." Frequent classroom visits and conferences support the beginners' instructional goals and prevent them from repeating costly errors.

7. Balance new teachers' need for training with their need for time. Induction programs consume time, a valuable commodity for the first-year teacher. If district training programs are to ease the newcomer's transition into teaching, they must be efficient and supportive rather than merely time-consuming and demanding.

8. Form partnerships to support new and veteran teachers. Individual schools are not alone in their concern for new teachers. Neighboring schools, the district office, local teachers' associations, and teacher education institutions share that concern. The union of their resources strengthens a region's new corps of teachers.

The popular new induction programs simultaneously can meet the needs of beginning teachers and their districts. When the programs are judged by the passing of time, perhaps their most significant contribution will have been the increased interaction they spawned among professional in schools. Administrators and experienced teachers who unite to meet the needs of the newcomer

develop in that process structures of collegiality and collaboration that will serve schools in broader ways.

Postscript: NWREL Initiates Consortia to Encourage Induction Programs

Led by John Mahaffy, the Center for Professional Development at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory will establish three consortia this year to encourage programs for beginning teachers and structures of peer coaching. In each of the three areas--one urban setting, one rural, and one Hawaiian--Mahaffy will develop a consortium of individuals and institutions, potentially including teacher educators, state department personnel, education service district personnel, school districts' staff developers, and representatives of state or local teacher associations.

The three consortia will center on Josephine County School District, Oregon; Evergreen School District, Washington; and Leeward-Oahu School District, Hawaii.

Mahaffy sees staff development as a continuous process, beginning with teacher training and selection, including induction programs, and continuing with professional development activities until the teacher's retirement. "All of these steps become fragmented," he says, "and we need a way to pull together those people involved at each stage."

Although the consortia will focus on programs for beginning teachers and peer coaching, they will, Mahaffy believes, affect the entire staff development program within a geographic area:

We'll bring together people who are usually not brought together. Our goal is to build within each consortium the group's capacity to design and manage its own staff development programs. Our role is a facilitative one. We can't offer funding, but we can offer some time to help the consortia get organized, and some technical assistance such as staff training and program evaluation.

There are two ways to look at the laboratory's lack of funding for the induction programs. Mahaffy takes an optimistic view:

So many programs begin because they have sizable start-up grants. The states of Washington and California, for

instance, funded mentor teacher programs. The question then becomes, "What will the districts do to maintain these programs?" I'm afraid that as the money goes, good programs may go, too. Our lab has no money to give the three consortia, but my notion is that people will see the value of this program for education and that they will continue.

The three consortia with which Mahaffy works may not receive money for induction programs, but they will benefit from his expertise and his energy. Individuals or institutions not within the consortia's geographical boundaries can nonetheless maintain communication with the laboratory's efforts. Those who would like to be members of a Northwest regional network of people interested in collegiality, peer coaching, and induction programs may write to John E. Mahaffy, Center for Professional Development, NWREL, 300 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204. (503) 248-6800.

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